

**SUPERIOR COURT
TARGETED OPERATIONAL MASTER PLAN**

August 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are honored by the many people who contributed to this report. Their passion for justice and the well-being of children and families was evident in the energy and creativity that they brought to long hours of interviews, meetings, and focus groups. We greatly appreciate the contributions of judges, prosecutors, defenders, private attorneys, social workers, service providers, probation counselors, court staff, youth, families, and others. Without them, this report would not be possible. Please refer to Appendix B for a complete list of participants.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Michael J. Trickey, Co-Chair
Presiding Judge, King County Superior Court

Maura Brueger, Co-Chair
Senior Advisor for Federal Relations,
Office of King County Executive Ron Sims

CABINET OVERSIGHT GROUP

The Honorable Michael S. Spearman	Assistant Presiding Judge, King County Superior Court
The Honorable Patricia J. Clark	Chief Juvenile Judge, King County Superior Court
The Honorable Glenna S. Hall	Chief Unified Family Court Judge, King County Superior Court
The Honorable Corinna Harn	Chief Presiding Judge, King County District Court
The Honorable Larry Gossett	Metropolitan King County Council, District 10
The Honorable Kathy Lambert	Metropolitan King County Council, District 3
Leesa Manion	Deputy Chief of Staff, King County Prosecutor's Office
V. David Hocraffer	The Public Defender, King County
Bob Cowan	Director, King County Office of Management and Budget
Paul L. Sherfey	Chief Administrative Officer, King County Superior Court
Jackie Buchanan	Regional Administrator, Washington State Department of Health and Human Services
Noella Rawlings	Senior Assistant Attorney General, Washington State Office of the Attorney General
Lyman Legter	Director, Casey Family Programs
Carolyn D. Davis	Executive Director, Family Law CASA
Jim Blanchard	Executive Director, Auburn Youth Resources

CONSULTANTS

Steve Weller	Policy Studies Inc.
John Martin	Policy Studies Inc.
Steve Steadman	Policy Studies Inc.
Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey	Policy Studies Inc.
Dan Wiley	Dan Wiley and Associates
Joe Cabel	Looking Glass Analytics

OMP PROJECT TEAM

Paul L. Sherfey	Chief Administrative Officer, King County Superior Court
Michael Gedeon	Senior Policy Analyst, King County Office of Management and Budget
Kelli Carroll	Senior Policy Analyst, King County Office of Management and Budget

SUPERIOR COURT TARGETED OPERATIONAL MASTER PLAN

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Chapter 1: Purpose and Background for Operational Master Plan.....	6
Project Structure	7
Project Approach	8
Chapter 2: Overview of Juvenile and Family Court	10
Family Court	10
Therapeutic Courts.....	13
Ex Parte	14
Technology	14
Chapter 3: OMP Building Blocks.....	16
Preferred Packages.....	22
Elements Common to All Packages.....	27
Chapter 4: Operational Master Plan Recommendations.....	28
Recommendation 1: Coordinate Court and Service Responses to Families Involved in Multiple Court Cases	28
Recommendation 2: Improve Litigant Information and Assistance	30
Recommendation 3: Reduce Case Processing Delays	32
Recommendation 4: Optimize Therapeutic Courts	33
Recommendation 5: Provide Case-Related Services On-Site	35
Recommendation 6: Establish within the Court Facility Screening, Assessment, and Linkages to Community-Based Social and Treatment Services	36
Recommendation 7: Provide a Safe and Secure Environment for Litigants, Public, Court and Court-related Staff	37
Recommendation 8: Improve Facility Accessibility	39
Recommendation 9: Assure Cultural Competency.....	41
Recommendation 10: Optimize Technology	43
Recommendation 11: Provide Facilities that Meet the Needs Identified Above.....	44
Appendix A: Assessment Report	
Appendix B: List of Participants	

Executive Summary

Background

The King County Superior Court is the 12th largest jurisdiction in the United States. One of the court's primary duties is the resolution of legal disputes involving children and families. The proceedings resulting from these disputes can be complex and demanding, with a high priority of keeping families whole while acting in the best interest of the children involved. In addition, families may be involved in multiple case proceedings simultaneously, such as child dependency, dissolution, and juvenile offender or truancy actions. Each case type has multiple distinct statutes and procedures and a single family may find itself involved in proceedings for extended periods of time. Moreover, the corresponding services provided to the families, as mandated by the legal system, can often be difficult to access, remotely located and significantly delayed.

Added to this case complexity and necessary corresponding service delivery methodologies, are issues with the court spaces used to resolve these cases. Family Law cases are heard either at the downtown courthouse or the Regional Justice Center (RJC) in Kent. Dependency fact-finding hearings are presently held at all three Superior Court locations: the juvenile court, the downtown courthouse and the RJC. Juvenile offender cases are heard at the juvenile facility and Becca are heard at both the RJC and at the juvenile facility. Parking near, and transportation to, each facility is a challenge for the public, court users and staff. The juvenile facility, which includes a detention facility, was not built in such a way as to be conducive to assisting youth and their families in resolving disputes. This facility also faces millions of dollars in major maintenance projects in the near future.

Against the backdrop of this complex approach to resolving legal conflicts involving our community's children and families, the court began internal discussions in early 2004 to identify ways in which the needs of children and families involved in the legal system could be more efficiently and effectively addressed. This dialog resulted in passage, within the 2005 King County Adopted Budget, of a provision supporting the preparation of a Targeted Operational Master Plan (OMP), aimed specifically at addressing the complexity of services and facility limitations currently existing in providing for children-family justice.

Operational Master Plan Process

Pursuant to this legislation, the Superior Court and King County Executive Office jointly led the effort to prepare the Targeted OMP. The overall focus of the OMP is to develop and evaluate alternatives for the effective delivery of justice services to children and families in King County.

In particular, the Operational Master Plan:

- Identifies the guiding principles for an effective children and family justice system;
- Describes current programs and services for children and families in the court system;
- Assesses work processes, interfaces among programs and agencies, and needs for functional adjacencies; and,
- Makes recommendations for improvements in the systems.

The year-long collaborative effort that produced the OMP was overseen by the Cabinet Oversight Group with representatives from the King County Superior Court, King County

Executive Office, King County Council, Office of Management and Budget, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Office of Public Defense, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State Attorney General's Office, King County District Court, King County Youth and Family Service Network, Casey Family Programs, and King County Bar Association. Additionally, the OMP effort actively engaged participation from a wide array of individuals, groups and entities that either utilize the services of the juvenile court and family law operations or could be affected by changes to the court's operations in the development and review of the OMP. One helpful source of information was a series of focus groups involving youth, parents, and guardians who had "first-hand" experience with court system.

The consulting firm, Policy Studies Incorporated (PSI), was tasked with taking the input of these stakeholders and developing alternatives for the efficient and effective delivery of justice services for children and families in King County. Through a series of working papers, PSI drafted guiding principles, analyzed operational needs and facility implications, forecasted workload, and developed options for meeting those needs. The Assessment Report, PSI's final product, provided an analytical assessment of the viable options identified in PSI's review and reflected the work products of the three working papers in summary form.

The Cabinet Oversight Group reviewed, discussed, and guided the OMP through each step of its development and in particular crafted the following OMP and its eleven recommendations. These recommendations make up an overall strategy for effectively delivering justice services to children and families who are referred to the Court.

Guiding Principles

Early in the project, a set of guiding principles for shaping and assessing potential OMP recommendations were identified. The five major guiding principles emerged after extensive stakeholder interviews and discussions with the Cabinet Oversight Group. The guiding principles are a core element of the recommendations of the OMP. They are highlighted as follows:

Guiding Principle 1: Accessible. The justice system should be convenient, timely, and affordable to everyone with a legitimate concern.

Guiding Principle 2: Understandable. Families need to understand the terminology used in the court and what they are being ordered to do.

Guiding Principle 3: Comprehensive. Holistically address families with multiple court cases, both in terms of legal matters, and in terms of treatment and supports services.

Guiding Principle 4: Effective. Produce better outcomes for families in King County.

Guiding Principle 5: Culturally Competent. Assure the justice system's sensitivity to issues of language and culture

Workload Forecast

The OMP provides a long-term outlook for operations and services related to cases involving children and families. The consultants produced a high-level forecast of caseload and judicial

need through 2020. This forecast indicates overall that the increase in workload is likely to be modest. Based on projected population increases and filing rates per 100,000 population, an 11 percent increase in workload and judicial need is projected from 2005 to 2020.

Recommendation Summary

The OMP recommendations are the result of these themes and a detailed review of over 60 individual options. PSI facilitated the review discussions and created a framework for shaping the options into more distinct packages. Based on these discussions, the Cabinet Oversight Group developed eleven OMP recommendations. In the detailed OMP document, each recommendation includes a discussion of the needs that the particular recommendation addresses, considerations that shaped the recommendation and the identified next steps.

While some of the OMP recommendations involve non-capital alternatives, there are many system changes that would necessitate facility improvements and/or construction of additional space. It should be noted that the substantial deficits in the Youth Services court facility are acknowledged in the OMP. Portions of the court facility are over 40 years old and the site currently needs over \$20 million in substantial major maintenance improvements. The need to replace this facility or address the existing facility deficiencies at the current juvenile court facility was a consistent theme throughout the development of the OMP. Pursuant to King County Code, the recommendations of the OMP involving potential facility needs or improvements require a subsequent facility master planning effort.

The eleven OMP recommendations outline a strategy for more effectively resolving problems of children and families that are referred to court. Some of these recommendations involve changes to operations or internal court administration/governance; others imply additional capital expansion or improvement. The recommendations are summarized as follows:

Recommendation 1: Coordinate Court and Service Responses to Families Involved in Multiple Court Cases. To address the legal matters of children and families consistently, comprehensively, and without unnecessary duplication, this recommendation involves combining or coordinating cases involving the same family. An additional goal is better coordination and communication among agencies responsible for assessing, referring, managing, and providing services to families complying with court-ordered service requirements

Recommendation 2: Improve Litigant Information and Assistance. There are two major components to this recommendation: Develop specific improvements to litigant information and assistance based on a litigant surveys and examine the feasibility of expanding the role and number of court staff to increase procedural advice to litigants in dependency, family law, Becca, offender, and other matters involving children and families.

Recommendation 3: Reduce Case Processing Delays. Several strategies include improving case management, eliminating unnecessary or duplicative hearings, improving trial scheduling, and assuring judges have the necessary information to accomplish something at every hearing. This recommendation also entails developing an automated case management system that is capable of identifying and providing complete information on all the cases involving a family

Recommendation 4: Optimize Therapeutic Courts. With more experience and information about therapeutic courts, there is an opportunity to conduct policy discussions to develop a sustainable approach to determining the size and funding for therapeutic courts.

Recommendation 5: Provide Case-Related Services On-Site. There are numerous court-related services that if readily accessible help move the case through the procedural steps necessary to bring the case to resolution. These services should be identified and incorporated into the facility master plan process.

Recommendation 6: Establish within the Court Facility Screening, Assessment and Linkages to Community-Based Social and Treatment Services. This recommendation would provide an integrated process for screening, assessment, and enrollment into social and treatment services on the site of the court facility so that clients can be engaged and linked to social and treatment services before they leave the court facility.

Recommendation 7: Provide a Safe and Secure Environment for Litigants, Public, Court and Court-related Staff. Given that court cases are often highly volatile, it is imperative that the environment for litigants, witnesses, family members, attorneys, staff and judicial officers is safe and secure. Under this recommendation, the Seattle Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Facilities Management Division, the U.S. Marshals Office, and the court would identify and implement methods for assuring a safe and secure environment. The facility master plan process would also incorporate security and safety measures into the design of any new buildings.

Recommendation 8: Improve Facility Accessibility. Accessing the court facility itself can present additional difficulties to some litigants and court users. Simply getting to the facilities poses a great challenge for many of the litigants, staff and community service partners. This recommendation seeks to improve access to court facilities through exploring public transportation options, improvements to parking needs, technology solutions, alternative operating hours, and a community-based reception center for law enforcement.

Recommendation 9: Assure Cultural Competency. Culture has a major influence on effectiveness of the justice system to deliver services. King County is growing increasingly diversified. While cultural competency is a component of every recommendation within this OMP, this recommendation encompasses building the knowledge and skills of all individuals and systems to work effectively with families from many different cultures. It specifically calls for involving clients, community leaders, and service providers from the minority community to improve cultural competency.

Recommendation 10: Optimize Technology. The complexity of court processes and related services mandates development of technology systems which can match that complexity and result in useful information for both the justice system and the public. The current juvenile and family justice system relies upon 21 stand alone applications and five major technology systems. The specific needs of the justice system and the public need to be clearly identified, and corresponding technology solutions matched with those needs.

Recommendation 11: Provide Facilities that Meet the Needs Identified. This OMP outlines new potential directions that include providing a full array of services on-site, enhanced case management approaches, improved information and assistance to litigants, and other recommendations that in total may require additional space and a different facility or facilities. Since many of the OMP recommendations require that significant facility needs be addressed, the next step is to examine facility implications by completing a Facility Master Plan (FMP). In particular, the FMP should include an examination of three facility options based on the preferred packages selected by the Cabinet Oversight Group.

Facility Options	
A	One full service facility
B	One initial full service facility, with a second full service facility to follow
C	Two full service facilities

These options will be compared to a fourth option which would only address the long-term facility needs for the current juvenile court operations.

Chapter 1: Purpose and Background for Operational Master Plan

The King County Superior Court is the 12th largest jurisdiction in the United States. With 51 judges, 12 commissioners and 380 staff, the court handles many different types of legal matters. One of the court's primary duties is the resolution of disputes involving children and families. The proceedings concerning children and families can be complex and demanding, with a high priority of keeping families whole while acting in the best interest of the children involved.

In addressing children and family legal matters, there can be numerous proceedings and hearings in which a family may need to participate in order to resolve a conflict. It is not uncommon for families to be involved in multiple case proceedings simultaneously, such as child dependency, dissolution, and juvenile offender or truancy actions. Each case type has multiple distinct statutes and procedures and a single family may find itself involved in proceedings for extended periods of time. In addition, the corresponding social and treatment services provided to the families, as mandated by the legal system, can often be difficult to access, particularly if they are remotely located, or have significant waiting lists, or require fees beyond the financial capability of the family.

Added to this case complexity and necessary corresponding service delivery methodologies, are issues with the court spaces used to resolve these cases. Space is not available to provide the needed services that move the case forward. Parking is often not available or prohibitively expensive. Public transit is not structured in such a way to provide viable options to the locations in the county. Family Law cases are heard either at the downtown courthouse or the Regional Justice Center (RJC) in Kent. Dependency fact-finding hearings are presently held at all three Superior Court locations: the juvenile court, the downtown courthouse and the RJC. Juvenile offender cases are heard at the juvenile facility; and truancy, at risk youth, and children in need of services cases (also known as Becca cases) are heard at both the RJC and at the juvenile facility. The juvenile facility, which includes a detention facility, was not built in such a way as to be conducive to assisting youth and their families in resolving disputes. The current facility also faces millions of dollars in major maintenance projects in the near future.

Against the backdrop of this complex approach to resolving legal conflicts involving our community's children and families, the court began internal discussions in early 2004 to identify ways in which the needs of children and family involved in the legal system could be more efficiently and effectively addressed. This dialog resulted in passage, in late 2004, of an ordinance allowing the court, its criminal justice partners and the community service providers to proceed with a targeted Operational Master Plan, aimed specifically at addressing the fragmentation of services and facility limitations currently existing in providing for children-family justice.

The 2004 enabling legislation provided:

The county council and superior court have determined that there may be significant benefits from a comprehensive approach and review of operations as specified below. Toward this end, by June 1, 2005, the superior court, in collaboration with the departments of judicial administration, community and

human services and the offices of the prosecuting attorney, public defender and management and budget, will prepare a detailed work plan for an operational master planning effort reviewing the operations and potential facilities needs for a targeted operational master planning effort for the court's juvenile, family law and supporting therapeutic court. In addition, the work plan should include a review of legal financial obligations (LFOs) and their collection by the county. The work plan effort should include the court and judicial administration, but also should solicit input from other agencies involved in the family courts or therapeutic courts (state, county and community). The detailed work plan for the operational master plan shall be developed to include a scope of work, tasks, schedule, needed resources and milestones. The plan should also include a description of the proposed group that will be responsible for the oversight of the planning effort and also identify the other county agencies that will need to participate in the planning effort.

In the spring of 2005, the Superior Court and the Office of Management and Budget convened a work group to prepare this work plan. In response to the above proviso, the work plan was transmitted to the King County Council on June 1, 2005 and approved by motion in August of 2005. In May of 2006, the Executive indicated in a letter to the County Council that the target date for the submittal of the Targeted Operational Master Plan would be revised to the end of August 2006.

The purpose of the Operational Master Plan is to:

- Identify the guiding principles for an effective children and family justice system;
- Describe current programs, services and staffing for children and families in the court system;
- Assess work flow processes, interfaces among programs and agencies, and needs for functional adjacencies; and
- Make recommendations for improvements in the systems.

Project Structure

To carry out these purposes of the Operational Master Plan, an organizational structure was created to maximize input and assure oversight. This organizational structure included these key elements:

- **Cabinet Oversight Group** – tasked with providing the Operational Master Plan consultants with clear policy direction and with policy input necessary to shape the final recommendations. Participants included representatives from the King County Superior Court, King County Executive Office, Office of Management and Budget, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Office of Public Defense, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State Attorney General's Office, King County District Court, King County Youth and Family Service Network, Casey Family Programs, King County Council and King County Bar Association. A list of Cabinet participants is included in Appendix B.
- **Project Work Group** – tasked with working closely with the Operational Master Plan

consultants to comprehend the operational details and complexities of the current children and family justice system; and to provide policy suggestions for consideration by the Cabinet Oversight Group. Participants included representatives from each of the organizations included in the Cabinet Oversight Committee and additional representatives from King County Department of Judicial Administration, King County Sheriff's Office, and King County Adult and Juvenile Detention.

- **Project Team** – tasked with the daily management of the Operational Master Plan consultant and for assuring the project work group and Cabinet Oversight Group had the information necessary to complete their respective tasks.
- **Consultants** – tasked with developing and evaluating alternatives for the delivery of justice services and making recommendations for the efficient and effective delivery of justice services for children and families in King County. Policy Studies, Inc. (PSI) was selected through a competitive RFP process in the fall of 2005.
- **Stakeholders** – tasked with representing specific view points critical to developing consensus in a final document stakeholders encompassed all organizations included in the Cabinet Oversight Group and Project Work Group. In addition, the stakeholder outreach process included school districts and police agencies as well as litigants and the families utilizing the children-family justice system¹. The consultants either met individually with stakeholders or conducted focus groups. The focus groups included litigant and family stakeholders; teens in foster care; female juveniles in detention; male juvenile offenders out of detention; juveniles from Juvenile Drug Court and their families; parents in Family Treatment Court; parents in divorce cases; parents in UFC intensive case management program; a parent in dependency court; and a parent in dependency and drug courts.

Project Approach

Working with the consultant, PSI, a process was established to assure consultant progress toward the end goal of completing the Operational Master Plan. From November 2005 through June 2006, a series of three, distinct working papers were produced by the consultant, which ultimately were used by the consultant to create a fourth deliverable, an assessment report.

The topics for each of the three working papers included:

- Working Paper One – Identified goals and desired outcomes for cases involving children and families;
- Working Paper Two – Provided a description of current operations and facilities;
- Working Paper Three – Identified operational and facilities needs, options for meeting those needs, and forecasting of potential future caseloads and workloads.

The assessment report, which is included as Appendix A to this Operational Master Plan, reflects the work products of working papers 1, 2 and 3. The report provides the analytical assessment of the viable options identified in PSI's review of our systems, including significant interactions

¹ Nine different court user focus groups were held during February 2006. These groups included juvenile offender males, juvenile offender females, older foster youth, foster parents, UFC case managed families, family law families, family treatment court, juvenile drug court families, and families involved in the dependency system. The focus groups were held in various locations across King County.

with the Project Work Group, the Project Team and the Cabinet Oversight Group.

The logic model for the working papers, ultimately leading to the consultant's Assessment Report and the Operational Master Plan, is as follows:

Working Paper One		Working Paper Two		Working Paper Three		Assessment Report		OMP
Guiding Principles	→	Descriptive theses from caseload focus groups, interviews, client focus groups, data analysis, and facilities assessment	→	Needs inventory Options Forecasting	→	Implications for facilities, staffing, service delivery, and other resources.	→	Recommendations, for the OMP and other action initiatives

Critical to completion of this Operational Master Plan was outreach to the broad spectrum of stakeholders. This was achieved through a series of focus group sessions, which included communication from families involved in the Family Law System, from Juvenile Offenders, from youth in foster care system, from parents involved in the dependency system, from attorneys involved in cases involving youth, from youth and families involved in therapeutic courts and from social service providers.

It was within this framework that the Operational Master Plan has been developed and goals identified to guide the children-family justice system in the years ahead.

Chapter 2: Overview of Juvenile and Family Court

There are several ways in which children and families come into contact with the court system. This chapter provides an overview of the various case types that involve children and families and how the court organizes its juvenile and family operations.

Family Court

Unified Family Court (UFC) handles all family law matters where children are involved, including divorce or legal separation with children, parenting issues, paternity, adoption, support issues and modifications, domestic violence and some dependency matters.

UFC also has an intensive case managed program which combines cases and hearings for difficult and/or multiple cases involving the same family. The types of cases are referred to as UFC case managed, to differentiate them from mainstream UFC family law cases. UFC cases are initiated with the filing of documents, either directly by the parties, or by hired counsel. Litigants who do not use attorneys are known as pro se litigants. A judge is assigned at the time of filing. Pretrial activity for contested cases often includes multiple hearings conducted by Family Law Commissioners. Other pretrial actions include the development of a temporary parenting plan and the establishment of temporary orders, including restraining orders and child support. In many cases, mediation of these matters is necessary between the parties. A parent divorce seminar is required of all petitioners for dissolution who have children. After trial, the parties sometimes must return to court to enter final documents; alternatively, the judge may be able to fill out those documents immediately after the trial has concluded, while the parties are still present in the courtroom. Any modifications to the parenting plan or child support agreement are considered to be a new proceeding and parenting plan modifications can be requested (with strict legal requirements) while a child is still covered by the parenting plan (usually until the child reaches age 18), while support modifications can be requested up until the time the child either reaches age 18 or is no longer dependent on the parents.

Intensive Case Managed Family Law Cases

The UFC intensive case management program combines court actions and hearings for matters involving the same family and allows for coordination and judicial oversight of evaluations, social services, and follow-up. UFC case managed cases usually begin as regular UFC family law cases and continue along the UFC track until they are referred to a case manager for review and possible designation as an intensive case management case. Anyone involved in a case (judges, lawyers, social workers or the involved parties) can refer a case for consideration as an intensively case-managed case. Referral can occur at any stage in a case.

There are a number of criteria for designating a case managed case. The family must have other specific types of pending cases, and those cases must have a trial date at least five months away. The particular cases involving a family that are linked with the divorce/custody case include: paternity cases; dependency cases; civil domestic violence protection orders; and Becca law matters, including at risk youth (ARY), children in need of services (CHINS), and truancy cases.

After acceptance into the program, the multiple family actions are either linked or consolidated,

and then assigned to one judge. That judge may allow pretrial motions to be brought before a regular court commissioner. The case manager assists litigants in obtaining services or resources, reports any issues of noncompliance to the Court, and sets review hearings when necessary, allowing for intensive judicial oversight.

There is staffing capability for 50 case managed cases by each case manager at the downtown Seattle courthouse and the Kent courthouse. The referrals to the program are double the number ultimately accepted into the program. For cases that are accepted, the originally assigned UFC judge will usually keep the case throughout the process.

Family Law Locations, Facilities, Judicial Cadre and Staffing

UFC mainstream and case managed cases are heard at both the downtown Seattle and Kent courthouses. A self-help center for family law cases, called the Family Law Information Center (FLIC) exists in the RJC but not in the Seattle courthouse. The RJC has a drop-in child care center, while Seattle does not. In the Seattle courthouse, the various offices that a litigant might need to access in order to file motions, working papers, or requests for emergency orders are on different courthouse floors. Both the Seattle and RJC sites are served by public transit. No family law cases are heard at the Juvenile facility. A domestic violence protection order advocacy program is located in the downtown Seattle courthouse. Law library services are available at both the RJC and downtown Seattle courthouse.

There are seven UFC judges, including one Chief Judge, and five family law commissioners hearing cases in the two facilities. Judges are rotated through family law.

Each judge has a bailiff, and a courtroom clerk is assigned for recording minutes and handling exhibits. The seven UFC judges and one dependency judge collectively utilize four civil case specialists and two case managers who work with clients on case matters.

Family Court Services serves all judicial officers and provides education, mediation, evaluation, domestic violence assessments, Child Protective Services status reports, limited adoption services, and conciliation counseling for children and families involved in family court. Family Court Services also provides emancipation reports and administers the mandatory parent seminar. This seminar is required of all divorcing families where children are involved. The staff of Family Court Services includes social workers, facilitators, and support staff.

Juvenile Court

Juvenile Court has jurisdiction over juvenile offender, dependency, and Becca case types. Juvenile Court also oversees juvenile drug court, juvenile treatment court and family treatment court.

Juvenile Offender

If a juvenile (youth to age 18 years of age) is accused of committing an offense, the matter is referred by law enforcement to the prosecuting attorney and ultimately to the court. After reviewing the information provided by law enforcement, and based on the seriousness of the offense and the juvenile's criminal history, the prosecutor may divert an offender case or may

file a case with the court, charging a youth for committing the offense. If a case is filed, the juvenile goes to court for a series of hearings that typically lead to a finding of found guilty, pleading of guilt, or a finding of not guilty. Youth alleged to have committed an offense has a right to legal counsel, often provided by attorneys through the Office of Public Defense. The Office of Public Defense also provides legal counsel to most youth involved in Becca matters.

A Juvenile Probation Counselor (JPC) is assigned to the case at arraignment where the JPC meets with the juvenile. After the arraignment, the JPC administers a short assessment of the juvenile that covers issues such as substance abuse, mental health, the offender's living situation, and school. This provides a risk assessment to the judge of high, moderate, or low, for a recommended level of supervision. If a juvenile is placed on probation, the supervising JPC administers the full assessment. Many of the offenders who are assessed as medium or high risk are referred to one of three evidence-based programs – Multi-Systemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, or Aggression Replacement Training. The providers of these programs are located in Seattle and South King County.

At Risk Youth

Parents seeking the court's assistance in obtaining and maintaining control over their juvenile child can file an ARY petition. ARY petitions are filed when the juvenile is a runaway, is behaving in a way that endangers his/her health, safety or welfare; or has a problem with drugs and/or alcohol and there are no pending drug or alcohol offenses.

Children in Need of Services

Parents, youth or other interested parties may file a CHINS case. CHINS actions are filed when a juvenile requires a temporary out-of-home placement and is a runaway, is behaving in a way that endangers his/her health, safety or welfare, or needs other services.

Truancy

School districts initiate truancy actions when a juvenile "skips" school seven times in a month or ten times during the school year. A truancy petition can be filed on the child or the parent or both.

Dependency and Termination

A dependency petition may be filed if a child has been abandoned, abused or neglected, or has no parent, guardian, or custodian capable of adequately caring for the child. The Department of Social and Health Services file most petitions pursuant to a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation. If a child is found to be dependent by the court, decisions made in the case are based on the best interests of the child and focus on having the child in a permanent placement within 12 months of the petition being filed.

Juvenile Court Locations, Facilities, Judicial Cadre and Staffing

- **Juvenile Offender:** All juvenile offender matters are heard at the Youth Services Center (YSC). The county's sole juvenile detention center is located adjacent to the court facility in central Seattle. No juvenile offender matters are heard at the RJC. There are no youth holding facilities at the RJC.

There are four juvenile offender case judges located at the YSC, including the chief judge. Juvenile court has one juvenile probation counselor for every 25 cases and 12 intake juvenile probation counselors.

YSC courtrooms are outdated and do not conform to current courtroom standards. YSC does not offer private meeting space where families can meet with providers or attorneys. Parking is inadequate for demand, food is not available on site, public transit options are limited and daycare is not offered for parents/families utilizing the facility. There are neither urinalysis testing services nor service provider spaces on site.

- **Dependency and Termination Cases:** There is one judge and two juvenile court commissioners assigned to hear dependency and termination cases, with additional judicial officers assigned to hear dependency and termination cases as needed. Other judicial resources are utilized for dependency and termination cases as needed. Judges hear dependency and termination trials and hearings at each of the court facilities, Seattle courthouse, YSC and at the RJC. Juvenile court commissioners who hear dependency and termination matters do so at YSC and RJC.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are volunteers who represent the best interests of the child in dependency matters. About 60% of all dependency cases have appointed CASA volunteers.

- **Becca Cases:** ARY, CHINS and truancy cases that make up Becca cases are heard by one assigned juvenile court commissioner at both YSC and RJC. Depending on the case type, a truancy facilitator, ARY/CHINS facilitator and cases managers may be available to assist. In addition, some Becca cases may result in the youth being ordered to detention.

Therapeutic Courts

In partnership with the King County Department of Community and Human Services, the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services, and its community providers, Superior Court operates three different therapeutic courts: Juvenile Drug Court, Juvenile Treatment Court and Family Treatment Court, each of which targets a specific population. These programs closely monitor client participation in substance abuse and mental health treatment.

- **Juvenile Drug Court** provides substance abusing juvenile offenders and their families with weekly court appearances before an assigned judge. A team closely monitors each participant to assure that comprehensive treatment and support services are received and completed. Graduation ceremonies are conducted for youth that successfully complete the program and the substance related criminal charge is dismissed.
- **Juvenile Treatment Court** targets juvenile offenders with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems by providing services, which include early assessment, evidenced-based treatment, advocacy teams and a trained mentor. A team and assigned judge meet at least monthly with participant youth and their families. Upon program completion, substance abuse related criminal charges are usually dismissed and support services continue to be provided within the community.

- **Family Treatment Court** works with families in dependency cases that involve parental substance abuse by providing parents with frequent court appearances, judicial monitoring of the family's treatment progress and the support of a non-adversarial team. Successful completion of Family Treatment Court results in safe and permanent homes for children, either through family reunification or an alternative permanent placement.

The therapeutic courts conduct hearings at YSC only. There are three judges who hear treatment cases although these are not full time assignments. The therapeutic court judge has one treatment liaison and one additional support staff. In addition, these courts have access to treatment services.

Ex Parte

The Ex Parte and Probate Department operates daily in both the King County Superior Courthouse in Seattle and the King County Regional Justice Center in Kent.

Family Law cases have many points where Ex-Parte is utilized, including:

- Final orders in uncontested Dissolution and Legal Separation proceedings for both pro-se and represented parties (more than 2500 annually)
- Review hearings on Non-parental Custody petitions
- Default Orders not requiring notice
- Post-decree relief orders
- Issuing many agreed or uncontested orders in family law matters
- Initial applications to set Show Cause hearings and Orders to Show Cause
- Temporary Restraining Orders
- Domestic Violence Temporary Protection Orders
- Temporary Protection Orders in certain Harassment proceedings
- Emergency motions to amend or modify Protection Orders or Temporary Restraining Orders including short contested hearings
- Orders to waive filing fees to file any initial petition based on indigency

Additionally, Adoption Petitions are initiated and uncontested adoptions are finalized in ex-parte.

At the RJC, the Commissioner also receives Motions for Contempt, Arrest Warrants and Orders to Show Cause for At Risk (ARY) and Child in Need of Services (CHINS) Contempt motions.

The Ex Parte departments in Seattle and Kent enter several thousand orders each year in Family Law cases. Their involvement is instrumental in initiating cases, ensuring temporary protections and immediate relief, and finalizations of uncontested matters. Ex-parte is a necessary part of the Family Law court proceedings.

Technology

There is no comprehensive automated case management information system providing information to judges, commissioners and staff on each of the case types covering children and

family law (family law, dependency, juvenile offender, Becca and therapeutic courts). The only case automated case management system that covers all case types, SCOMIS/JIS, does not provide all the case management components necessary to appropriately manage cases. There are eight major information systems and 21 supplementary databases in use by Superior Court and justice partners. The five primary information systems include:

- SCOMIS/JIS is the statewide Superior Court Management Information System, provided by the Washington State Administrative Office of the Court. It is the legal docket for the case and covers all case types. It is the primary source of statistical data on family law and UFC cases. JIS is the person database related to SCOMIS cases and is the mechanism to compile cases related to specific persons.
- Electronic Court Records (ECR) is the document management system for the courts and handles images of the legal case file. All case types are included.
- King County Case Management System (KCMS) is the case management database for family law and dependency cases that are assigned to judges.
- JUVIS/JCS is the statewide juvenile court information system. It contains information on dependency, offender, and Becca cases and draws its data from SCOMIS. King County does not use JUVIS/JCS for daily operations, as the state is not currently able to provide the data required by King County for daily operations
- JJWEB is the King County Juvenile Justice information system. It covers offender cases but not dependency or Becca cases.

Each of the above systems has a distinct function and purpose. None are duplicative in nature, though because of a lack of data integration, duplicative data entry most certainly occurs.

It should be noted that other agencies – such as, Office of Public Defense, Department of Social and Health Services, schools, service providers, and Department of Community and Human Services – have automated systems to support their operations involving children and family court. However, information is not readily shared across these systems.

Chapter 3: OMP Building Blocks

With input from numerous stakeholders and guidance from the Cabinet Oversight Group, the OMP consultants produced a series of working papers that covered the following building blocks: Guiding Principles, Inventory of Needs, Caseload Forecasting, Options, and Preferred Packages, and Common Elements for All Packages.

Guiding Principles

There are many competing priorities and interests for delivering justice services to children and families. Early in the project, it was important to reach general agreement about a set of guiding principles for shaping and assessing potential OMP recommendations. Five major guiding principles emerged after extensive stakeholder interviews and discussions with the Cabinet Oversight Group.

- **Accessibility:** For children and family, the justice system should be convenient, timely, and affordable. Accessibility to the justice system should minimize the burden to users in terms of transportation, childcare, impact to employment, unnecessary hearings, and other potential barriers. In addition, services necessary to resolve their court matters should be accessible and, if appropriate, provided to them before they leave the courthouse.
- **Understandability:** For families to participate effectively in developing appropriate and achievable resolutions to their own cases, the court process should be understandable to them. One element of this principle is that families should understand the terminology used in the court, what they are being ordered to do, and the consequences of their decisions. Another element is to create an environment that is less intimidating, hectic, and confusing.
- **Comprehensiveness:** Families with multiple court cases pose special difficulties for the court system. Dealing with those multiple problems in a comprehensive and holistic manner is an important guiding principle. This principle applies to not only all of the legal matters involving the same family but also to the resulting treatment and support services.
- **Effectiveness:** The goal of the court system should be to produce better outcomes for families in King County. Various stakeholders, reflecting their respective professional perspectives, emphasized different and usually complementary elements within this overall goal. Another aspect of assuring effectiveness is to promote continuous improvement based on use of evidence-based practices and knowledge of the outcomes of children and family cases.
- **Cultural Competency:** All services provided to families and children through the justice system should be culturally competent. This includes ensuring that court processes are sensitive to the issues of language and culture; meeting the individual needs of families and children in terms of accessibility, income, and community; and using strength-based cultural resources and networks.

Throughout the OMP project, these five guiding principles were a constant reminder of the desired future as current practices were examined, options were developed, and recommendations were formed.

Inventory of Needs

Another building block for this project was to understand the strengths and weaknesses of how justice and related-services are currently delivered to children and families. The OMP consultants interviewed additional stakeholders, held case flow sessions with those who work in the system, and conducted focus groups with youth and families who have experience with the court system. Consistent with the guiding principles, this wealth of information was organized into seven categories of needs summarized below:

Litigant Access and Convenience

The court process itself can impose significant burdens on some litigants. In particular, three aspects of the legal process were noted as burdensome: (1) the length of time from the start of a case to final resolution or disposition; (2) the time spent waiting in court for a case to be called on hearing days; and (3) the number of times that an event in a case is scheduled to take place but does not happen when scheduled. Continuances are another source of cost, wasted time and frustration for litigants. The burden that the court process can impose is magnified by the time and expense of traveling to court via this region's overloaded transportation systems.

Litigant Knowledge and Understanding

For families to participate effectively in developing appropriate and achievable resolutions to their own cases, the court process needs to be understandable to them. Litigants need to know how to navigate the process; fill out forms; learn their legal rights; understand the consequences of choices they have to make; and learn about available treatment programs and other services.

In family law cases, pro se litigants are common. Their ability or inability to navigate the process can affect the length of the process, the workload of the judges and other system actors, and the case outcomes, both legal and human. Many case processes are not intuitive and can pose unnecessary obstacles for pro se litigants. More information to pro se litigants is needed, both as to their legal rights and as to what to expect in the court process.

Coordinated Court Responses to Multiple Family Problems

Currently, families with multiple court cases will likely have each case proceed on separate legal tracks, each potentially involving separate judges, attorneys, case managers, and court-imposed conditions. The exceptions are those families involved in the UFC intensive case management program, which coordinates multiple cases. This program, however, is limited to certain types of cases and in the number of available slots.

Outside of the UFC intensive case management program, the potential consequences from not coordinating cases involving the same family include inconsistent or conflicting court orders (related to such serious issues as child custody or visitation), overburdening families, and difficulty in understanding the various court process and their implications.

In addition, the therapeutic court programs are designed to provide more intensive services for a particular case type – dependency for the Family Treatment Court and juvenile offender for the Juvenile Treatment Court and Juvenile Drug Court. The programs do not coordinate other cases involving the family or juvenile.

It should be noted that there are significant legal, logistical, and resource challenges with coordinating or consolidating different types of cases. Beyond technology solutions, work processes will need close examination to define and resolve these challenges.

Effective Service Delivery

Focus groups with youth and families revealed several potential needs with the current system for referring and delivering services. Their comments should be read with the understanding that the number of participants in the focus groups represents a small fraction of the clients involved in the court system. Nonetheless, their perspective is crucial and tends to parallel the research about effective practices.

Some participants felt that the courts were too automatic in determining what services to order, chosen from a set, limited menu. Another concern was that some treatment providers assume that everyone has the same problem without investigating the particular circumstances of the individual program participants and whether the program is appropriate to their needs. Treatment services, counseling, and education must be tailored to the specific needs of the parties. This was a consistent theme across the focus groups.

Participants also noted several barriers to accessing services, including long waiting lists, costs of services, and transportation. In addition, some participants expressed a concern about becoming overloaded with the number of services they may be required to attend.

Coordination also needs to occur across services systems, including identifying the target populations and goals of each program; identifying potentially overlapping clientele and conflicting performance goals; developing mechanisms for information exchange to identify families involved with more than one program; and developing mechanisms to coordinate the services provided to the family.

Adequate Staffing and Other Resources

There are areas of the court process that are driven by limitations of staffing and other resources. One key area is technology. The numerous disparate technology systems have many shortcomings, particularly with respect to supporting the need to identify families involved in multiple cases and coordinating across these cases. While JIS provides the basic functionality of identifying families with multiple cases, utilization is not consistent throughout the court. Staffing is another potential limitation in terms of the ability to expand UFC intensive case management and the training and support needed to assist litigants.

Accessible Court Facilities for Litigants, Families, and Justice System Actors

It is a fundamental concept that facilities/space should support services and that deployment patterns should be determined by service delivery priorities. Three facility-related needs were highlighted:

- Each of the three current court locations – downtown Seattle, Regional Justice Center, and Juvenile Court – accommodate different case types involving children and families. For example, juvenile offender cases are handled only at Juvenile Court; family law cases are handled at the Regional Justice Center and downtown Seattle; and dependency cases are heard in all three locations. In addition, crucial services in support of the court system are not provided uniformly at each site (e.g., juvenile detention, childcare, paternity testing) or not provided at any site (e.g., urinalysis). Parking and transportation are difficult to all three sites.
- While the Facility Master Plan will examine in depth the need for work spaces, a preliminary review noted many deficiencies with the courtroom and support spaces at Juvenile Court.
- Law enforcement, particularly from South King County, expressed a concern about the amount of time it takes to transport a youth to the juvenile detention facility at Juvenile Court. The need for more convenient assessment centers is also an important consideration.

Effective Outcomes for Children and Families

There is broad agreement among system actors that the ultimate goal of the justice system should be to produce high quality decisions for children and families in King County. The court, law enforcement, prosecution, defense, social services, probation, and treatment providers all play a role in the decision-making process. However, there needs to be consistency and coordination across the various agencies involved with these children and families. Some focus group participants raised concerns about the quality of decisions. Effectiveness is also diminished when the court process takes too long or the reason for the outcome is not well understood.

Caseload Forecasting

The OMP provides a long-term outlook for operations and services related to cases involving children and families. A workload forecast is a key building block for the OMP. The consultants produced a forecast of caseload and judicial need through 2020 and noted the many unknown factors that could impact this forecast. (Please refer to the Assessment Report for a full discussion of the workload forecast.) The results are highlighted below.

While this forecast indicates the overall magnitude of potential future workload, it is not intended to provide a precise or detailed measurement. Given the limited time and availability of data, caseloads were used as the indicator for workload. Caseloads do not take into account other factors, such as the number of hearings per case and the complexity of the case, that affect the actual work involved. Consequently, for some types of cases, the decline in caseloads over the last decade in King County may not reflect what is experienced in the courtroom.

However, the forecast of caseloads indicates overall that the increase in workload is likely to be modest. Based on projected population increases and filing rates per 100,000 population, an 11 percent increase in caseloads and workloads is projected from 2005 to 2020.

Workload Forecast

Case Type	2005			2010			2020		
	North	South	Total	North	South	Total	North	South	Total
Paternity	1,320	920	2,240	1,369	953	2,322	1,493	1,040	2,533
Civil DVPO	1,295	982	2,277	1,343	1,018	2,361	1,465	1,110	2,575
Family Law (kids)	1,838	1,342	3,180	1,906	1,391	3,297	2,079	1,518	3,597
Family law (no kids)	3,089	1,567	4,656	3,203	1,624	4,827	3,494	1,772	5,266
ARY/CHINS	192	207	399	199	215	414	217	234	451
Truancy	725	1,078	1,803	752	1,117	1,869	820	1,219	2,039
Dependency	342	253	595	355	262	617	387	286	673
Terminations	176	116	292	183	120	303	199	131	330
Juv. Offender	4,085	0	4,085	4,235	0	4,235	4,620	0	4,620
Subtotal w/o Offender	8,977	6,465	15,442	9,309	6,699	16,009	10,154	7,311	17,465
Total w/ Offender	13,062	6,465	19,527	13,544	6,699	20,244	14,774	7,311	22,085

Assuming this increase of caseload and judicial workload, the following judicial officer needs were forecasted:

- The total number of judges, excluding juvenile offender related judges, could be expected to grow from the current 14.5² to 16.4 in 2020.
- The total number of commissioners could be expected to grow from the current 9 to 9.62 in 2020.
- The number of judicial officers needed for juvenile offender cases could be expected to grow from 4.75³ to 5.37 in 2020.

As judges are added, a corresponding cadre of court staff will be needed. Further, there may be associated staffing implications for other organizations such as the Prosecuting Attorney, defense, or Attorney General staff as workload grows.

These forecasts must also be considered in the context of future statutory and policy changes. These changes can influence the ways that different types of cases are handled and the potential impact on workload. A forecasting work group consisting of court staff and the county project managers identified some of the potential policy changes on the horizon that, if adopted, could influence caseloads. The potential impacts of those changes cannot be projected with any degree of certainty. These projections could also be substantially affected by any changes in assumptions about filings/workload per judicial officer, by changes in filing rates for all cases or for specific case types, or by changes in the location of services. As noted later in this report, the proposed Facility Master Plan may include a refined forecast that will take into account many of the limitations discussed in this section.

² There are 19.25 total judicial officers in 2006 for children and family matters. The 14.5 figure is arrived at by subtracting the 4.75 (Chief juvenile judge and four juvenile offender judges) from the 19.25 total.

³ 4.75 is the total number of juvenile offender judges, including the Chief juvenile judge.

Potential Options for Meeting Identified Needs

The next building block in the OMP project was the development of an extensive list of over 60 potential options for meeting the major needs identified from stakeholder interviews and focus groups. The OMP consultants created an initial list of potential options and expanded it with suggestions from the Project Workgroup and Cabinet Oversight Group. The Cabinet Oversight Group ordered the options based on those that they were most interested in exploring further. While the top nine options are outlined below with the associated need category, the remaining options contain many useful suggestions and should be referenced as agencies move forward with further planning and implementation. The complete list of potential options is included in the attached Assessment Report.

Litigant Access and Convenience

- Improve case management to reduce the need for continuances by assuring that: (1) the necessary information for each hearing, including assessments, chemical tests, etc., is produced in a timely manner; and (2) that all the necessary system professionals are all available and present at hearings.
- For all case types, develop methods to identify multiple cases involving a single family and coordinate the progress of related cases.

Coordinated Court Responses to Multiple Family Problems

- Create a comprehensive Unified Family Court, with the following characteristics: (1) inclusion of the following case types: family law; dependency; termination of parental rights; adoption; paternity; guardianship; civil domestic violence protection orders; juvenile offender; juvenile status offenses (Becca cases); and misdemeanor domestic violence; (2) one family/one judge; (3) judges elected or assigned to the family court; (4) trained teams of prosecutors, defense attorneys, and social workers; (5) case managers to monitor the progress of every family; (6) a comprehensive social service network; and (7) outcome oriented performance measurement.

Adequate Staffing and Other Resources

- Develop an automated case management system that is capable of identifying and providing complete information on all the cases involving a family. Two obstacles that have to be overcome are (1) confidentiality requirements and how to maximize information exchange within those requirements; and (2) a means to develop common identifiers across cases that may involve parties with different last names.

Litigant Knowledge and Understanding

- Simplify the parenting plan by identifying the parts of the plan that are the most difficult to complete or tend to be the most contentious and either simplify the requirements or provide special assistance to parties in completing those parts.
- Identify and eliminate or simplify procedures that litigants have the most difficulty understanding.

Effective Service Delivery

- For some types of services, connect people to services before they leave the courthouse, to improve compliance with court ordered services. The court should identify those services and assure that provider staff are available in the courthouse to meet with clients after their hearings. This will require space in the courthouses for provider staff.
- For families with multiple court cases, develop a means to: (1) coordinate treatment programs for an individual to assure consistency and appropriateness; and (2) continually assess an individual's progress and move an individual from one program to another when a program appears to be failing to meet an individual's needs.

Accessible Court Facilities for Litigants, Families, and Justice System Actors

- Build an entire family law facility to include UFC family law, the UFC intensive case management program, juvenile offender, dependency, Becca cases, and the therapeutic courts. The new facility could also house an assessment center and treatment programs. Some have a vision of a "campus" with all services available in one place, to meet adjacency needs.

Preferred Packages

While the options provided many valuable ideas, the OMP consultants combined several of the COG's priority options into a set of nine packages. The COG then chose four of these as preferred packages. The original nine packages were organized according to two key dimensions – case management and service delivery approach – each consisting of three concepts.

Three case management concepts considered by the COG include:

- Unified Case Management – Multiple cases involving a family are resolved by the same judge (as described later in this section);
- Coordinated Case Management – Different types of cases involving families and children processed separately but coordinated through effective information exchange among the judges to assure consistency of orders and avoid duplicated, conflicting, or overly burdensome requirements (maintaining the UFC intensive case management program at its present level and scope); and
- Discrete Case Management - Each type of case involving families and children processed independently, even for families with multiple cases.

The COG also considered three service delivery concepts involving families and children:

- Centralized Service Delivery - One new full-service family court and support services facility, as described in detail later in this section, to handle all types of cases involving families and children;
- Regional Service Delivery - Two full-service sites to handle all types of cases involving families and children, one site at an expanded RJC, and one new full service site to replace the YSC, with juvenile detention at both sites; and
- Dispersed Service Delivery – Essentially maintaining the present configuration but with the facility issues at the YSC addressed, with juvenile offender cases limited to the YSC

and juvenile detention center and other types of cases involving families and children divided among other court sites.

The following matrix summarizes the features of the nine resulting option packages. Note that each of the packages contemplates addressing the facility deficiencies at the current Juvenile Court facility.

<div>Service Delivery</div> <div>Case Management</div>	Centralized Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One full service site New family court and support services facility 	Regional Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two full service sites YSC replaced with a new full service family court Juvenile detention at both sites 	Dispersed Service Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple sites with varying functions Address YSC Facility Needs
Unified Case Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases treated as a single unit 	Package 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family cases heard in a single location All cases for a single family processed as a single case Connection to service providers on site Assessment capability, juvenile detention on site 	Package 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family cases heard in each of two locations All cases for a single family processed as a single case Connection to service providers at each site Assessment capability, juvenile detention at each site 	Package 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple court locations with all case types heard in every location All cases for a single family processed as a single case Connection to service providers not available in every site Juveniles in detention transported to some locations for hearings
Coordinated Case Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases processed separately with coordination to assure consistency of results UFC intensive case management program maintained at its present level 	Package 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family cases heard in a single location Cases involving a single family processed as separate cases but coordinated Connection to service providers on site Assessment capability, juvenile detention on site 	Package 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family cases heard in each of two locations Cases involving a single family processed as separate cases but coordinated Connection to service providers at each site Assessment capability, juvenile detention at each site 	Package 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple locations, with not all case types heard at all locations Cases involving a single family processed as separate cases but coordinated Connection to service providers not available in every site Juvenile offender cases limited to court sites attached to juvenile detention
Discrete Case Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each case type processed independently 	Package 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family cases heard in a single location Cases involving a single family processed as independent cases Connection to service providers on site Assessment capability, juvenile detention on site 	Package 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family cases heard in each of two locations Cases involving a single family processed as independent cases Connection to service providers at each site Assessment capability, juvenile detention at each site 	Package 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple locations, with not all case types heard in all locations Cases involving a family processed as independent cases Connection to service providers not available in every site Juvenile offender cases limited to court sites attached to juvenile detention

To arrive at a set of preferred packages, the COG reviewed each package and as a group consistently expressed an interest in providing a more coordinated response to families involved

in multiple cases and in moving toward one or more full service sites. Consequently, Packages 1, 2, 4, and 5 define the range of directions that meet this interest. Moreover, the COG noted that today the court system operates somewhere between Packages 8 and 9 and dubbed the status quo as Package 8.5.

The preferred packages are concepts along a continuum of practices and are not necessarily practical or desirable to implement in their purest forms. The Assessment Report reflects the COG discussion about potential variations or hybrids that might better fit King County. The Assessment Report also contains a more detailed discussion and analysis of the preferred packages. The assessment of each package includes: (1) how well it satisfies the guiding principles and selection criteria articulated by the COG; and (2) its resource implications.

The following table includes a summary of this assessment for each package:

Package 1: Unified Case Management in a Single Full Service Site	
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UFC: Combine all case types involving the same family; one family/one judge; judges assigned to family court; specially trained teams of attorneys; dedicated case managers; comprehensive social service network; and outcome-oriented performance measures. • Full Service Facility: Comprehensive set of legal, social, and treatment services provided on site – for example, courts, support spaces, detention, childcare, food service, parking, supervised visitation, assessment, mental health services, adult holding cells, interview space, AFIS space, mediation, UA and paternity testing, large training room, law library, and treatment services
Variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UFC: A) Limit the case types that are combined to those that most frequently overlap. The remaining case types are coordinated. For example, juvenile offender cases could be coordinated after disposition. B) Target unified case management to the families that would most benefit. Cases for families not served by unified case management would be coordinated. • Full Service Facility: Do not provide treatment on site; instead focus on assessing and linking youth and families to services.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, this package is tailored to focus on the whole family and support many of their needs before they leave the facility. • As a single site, it would provide economies of scale for most agencies. However, it will pose significant difficulties for the family law attorneys whose offices tend to be set up near the RJC and downtown. • As a single site, this package is least accessible in terms of travel time. The current YSC is particularly not well served by public transit. • Once on site, service accessibility is convenient. Through combining cases, families may have fewer hearings. A single site will best be able to support a full set of services. Overall, this could reduce the number of trips for families. • Building and operating one full service facility would be less expensive than two. • Expanding UFC intensive case management will require more case managers and other support staff, although offsetting savings are not known at this time. • No jurisdiction has adopted a pure UFC model. Achieving this package would require analyzing current work process and outlining improvements that could be phased in. Technology improvements are also necessary.
Package 2: Coordinated Case Management on a Single Full Service Site	
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated Case Management: Processing different types of cases involving the same family as separate cases but coordinating court orders and case outcomes through sharing information among affected judges. • Full Service Facility: Comprehensive set of legal, social, and treatment services

	provided on site – e.g., courts, support spaces, detention, childcare, food service, parking, supervised visitation, assessment, mental health services, adult holding cells, interview space, AFIS space, mediation, urinalysis and paternity testing, large training room, law library, and treatment services
Variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated Case Management: As noted in Package 1, there could be variations where some cases or families are assigned to unified case management and the remaining cases are coordinated. Full Service Facility: Do not provide treatment on site; instead focus on assessing and linking youth to services.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, this package is major improvement in focusing on the whole family (albeit not as comprehensive as Package 1 and would support many of their needs before leaving the facility. As a single site, it would provide economies of scale for most agencies. However, it will pose significant difficulties for the family law attorneys whose offices tend to be set up near the RJC and downtown. As a single site, this package is least accessible in terms of travel time. The current YSC is particularly not well served by public transit. Once on site, service accessibility is convenient. A single site will best be able to support a full set of services. Unlike Package 1, families would not benefit from a reduction in hearings but still could experience fewer trips due to the availability of services on site. Building and operating one full service facility would be less expensive than two. The coordinated case management model is less staff intensive than the unified case management model, although implementing coordinated case management will still require additional support staff. Achieving this package may be easier in the short term than packages involving unified case management. Some work process changes and staffing additional are required. Technology improvements are also critical.
Package 4: Unified Case Management in Two Full Service Sites	
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UFC: Combine all case types involving the same family; one family/one judge; judges assigned to family court; specially trained teams of attorneys; dedicated case managers; comprehensive social service network; and outcome-oriented performance measures. Two Full Service Facilities (North & South): Comprehensive set of legal, social, and treatment services provided on site – e.g., courts, support spaces, detention, childcare, food service, parking, supervised visitation, assessment, mental health services, adult holding cells, interview space, AFIS space, mediation, UA and paternity testing, large training room, law library, and treatment services.
Variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UFC: A) Limit the case types combined to those that most frequently overlap but coordinate with other case types. For example, juvenile offender cases could be coordinated after disposition. B) Target unified case management to the families that would most benefit. Cases for families not served by unified case management would be coordinated. Two Full Service Facilities: Do not provide treatment on site; instead focus on assessing and linking youth to services. Provide holding cells for juveniles in one of the two facilities and increase transportation runs between facilities. First implement one full service facility and then build and operate the second facility after having refined the approach and when supported by growth in workload.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, this package is tailored best to focus on the whole family and support many of their needs before they leave the facility. With two sites, the court and most agencies would find it more expensive to operate. However, it is better suited for the family law attorneys whose offices tend to be set up near the RJC and downtown. With two sites, this package is more accessible than Packages 1 and 2 in terms of travel time. The current YSC is particularly not well served by public transit.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once on site, service accessibility is convenient. Through combining cases, families may have fewer hearings. A single site will best be able to support a full set of services. Overall, this could reduce the number of trips for families. Building and operating two full service facilities would be more expensive than one. For example, operating a second detention facility, establishing two administrative structures and smaller economies of scale would contribute to higher costs. Expanding UFC intensive case management will require more case managers and other support staff, although offsetting savings are not known at this time. No jurisdiction has adopted a pure UFC model. Achieving this package would require analyzing current work process and outlining improvements that could be phased in. Implementing these changes in two sites is more complicated than one site. Technology improvements are also necessary.
Package 5: Coordinated Case Management in Two Full Service Sites	
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated Case Management: Processing different types of cases involving the same family as separate cases but coordinating court orders and case outcomes through sharing information among affected judges. Two Full Service Facilities (North & South): Comprehensive set of legal, social, and treatment services provided on site – e.g., courts, support spaces, detention, childcare, food service, parking, supervised visitation, assessment, mental health services, adult holding cells, interview space, AFIS space, mediation, UA and paternity testing, large training room, law library, and treatment services.
Variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated Case Management: As noted in Package 1, there could be variations where some cases or families are assigned to unified case management and the remainder are coordinated. Two Full Service Facilities: Do not provide treatment on site; instead focus on assessing and linking youth to services. Provide holding cells for juveniles in one of the two facilities and increase transportation runs between facilities. First implement one full service facility and then build and operate the second facility after having refined the approach and when supported by growth in workload.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, this package is major improvement in focusing on the whole family (albeit not as comprehensive as Packages 1 & 4) and would support many of their needs before leaving the facility. With two sites, the court and most agencies would find it more expensive to operate. However, it is better suited for the family law attorneys whose offices tend to be set up near the RJC and downtown. With two sites, this package is more accessible than Packages 1 and 2 in terms of travel time. However, given the mobility and complexity of some families, it may be logistically challenging for court staff to move all related cases to the most convenient venue. The current YSC is particularly not well served by public transit. Once on site, service accessibility is convenient. Unlike Packages 1 & 4, families would not benefit from a reduction in hearings but still could experience less trips due to the availability of services on site. Building and operating two full service facilities would be more expensive than one. For example, operating a second detention facility, establishing two administrative structures and smaller economies of scale would contribute to higher costs. The coordinated case management model is less staff intensive than the unified case management model, although implementing coordinated case management will still require additional support staff. Achieving this package may be easier in the short term than packages involving unified case management. Some work process changes and staffing additional are required. Implementing these changes in two sites is more complicated than one site. Technology improvements are also critical.

Elements Common to All Packages

Five common elements appear in all packages selected by the COG: (1) improving litigant information and assistance; (2) work process improvements, including simplifying the process; (3) optimize the therapeutic courts; (4) provide a safe and secure environment for litigants, court staff, and the public; and (5) assure cultural competency. These elements are also OMP recommendations and are presented in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Operational Master Plan Recommendations

The Superior Court Targeted Operational Master Plan is a roadmap for more effectively resolving the problems of children and families that are referred to the Court. The roadmap consists of eleven recommendations that emerged from extensive discussions with stakeholders; a review of current operations; and an analysis of caseload trends. Each recommendation described below includes a discussion of the need addressed by the recommendation, considerations that shaped the recommendation, and suggested next steps.

Recommendation 1: Coordinate Court and Service Responses to Families Involved in Multiple Court Cases

Need

Currently, families with multiple court cases will likely have each case proceed on separate legal tracks, each involving separate judges, attorneys, case managers, and court-imposed requirements. The exceptions are those families involved in the UFC intensive case management program, which serves a limited number of families and handles only certain types of cases. Outside of this program, families involved in multiple cases face a bewildering court process, the potential of inconsistent or conflicting orders, and uncoordinated and burdensome requirements for participating in services. Currently, there is limited automated capacity to identify or track cases involving the same family.

Recommendation Summary

- Combine or coordinate cases involving the same families so that their children and family legal matters and court outcomes can be dealt with consistently, comprehensively, and without unnecessary duplication.
- Improve coordination and communication among agencies responsible for assessing, referring, managing, and providing services to families complying with court-ordered service requirements.

Applicable Guiding Principles

Comprehensiveness

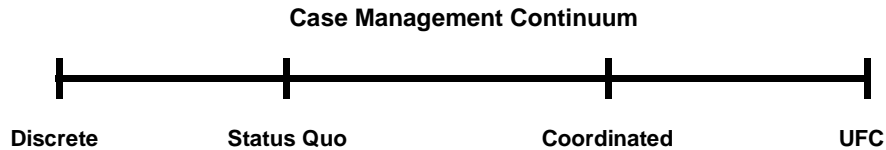
- Cases linked to provide comprehensive responses to multiple family problems.

Understandability

- Make the court system more personalized and less intimidating, hectic, and confusing.

Considerations

The following diagram illustrates that, in practice, case management is a continuum. No jurisdiction operates purely at the extremes of the continuum. King County currently has the UFC Intensive Case Management Program for a limited number of cases. Moreover, for other cases, coordination occurs informally or not at all. The diagram also illustrates that moving towards coordinated or unified case management represents a substantial improvement over status quo.



Coordinated Case Management: A coordinated case management system would put in place formal mechanisms, practices, and protocols for identifying all the cases with which a family is involved and for sharing information among judicial officers from each these cases. While it may be possible to manually identify and track these cases, an automated case management system is crucial. Additional court case managers may be necessary to support the sharing of information among judicial officers, particularly for the more complex cases. Development of protocols (e.g., information sharing) and training for attorneys, social workers, probation counselors, Becca case managers, and other affected staff is a prerequisite for coordinating service requirements.

Unified Case Management: At one level, the concept of unified case management is simple. One judge is assigned to hear all of the cases in which a family is involved. However, beyond this feature, there could be significant differences in how unified case management could be implemented. In particular, key questions include:

- Which types of cases should be included – family law; dependency; guardianship; termination of parental rights; adoption; paternity; civil protection orders; juvenile offender; juvenile status offenses (truancy, ARY, and CHINS)? For example, juvenile offender cases may be excluded (but coordinated) until disposition.
- How is eligibility for UFC determined?
- Should all families with multiple cases be served or those with the most difficult problems? Under what circumstances would unified case management most contribute to positive family outcomes?
- To what extent are cases combined vs. linked (where cases could have separate attorneys and proceed on separate tracks)? How does this impact the role of the attorneys and staffing?
- Are cases assigned to therapeutic courts included, coordinated, or tracked separately?

The answers to questions will determine where Superior Court’s case management approach falls in the continuum between coordinated and unified. It also determines the future scope of the current UFC Intensive Case Management Program. Any expansion of the current program will have budgetary impact to the court and involve complex work process improvements, addressing potential statutory requirements, developing regular and specialized training, implementing an automated case management system, and adding support positions such as case managers.

Since 2004, the Systems Integration Project⁴ has made progress in several areas related to this recommendation. These include:

⁴ The Casey Family Program, King County Superior Court, State Department of Social and Health Services, Educational Service District, King County Department of Community and Human Services, and other partners have joined together to promote increased cooperation, coordination, and integration for the benefit of children and families within the purview of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

- Developed a technology proposal that would allow tracking youth involved in the child welfare, offender, and potentially other systems.
- Published a legal analysis of what information can be shared across the dependency, offender, and education systems.
- Piloted a cross-systems training curriculum for probation counselors and case workers.
- Drafted protocols for probation counselors and case workers to coordinate cases involving the same youth and family.

Coordination of Services: Regardless of the case management approach, there is a need to extend coordination to the services children and families receive as a result of participating in the court process. For families with multiple court cases, develop a means to: (1) coordinate treatment programs for an individual to assure consistency and appropriateness; and (2) continually assess an individual's progress and move an individual from one program to another when a program appears to be failing to meet an individual's needs.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine preferred case management approach including which types of cases ideally would be 1) combined, 2) coordinated, or 3) separated. • Examine work processes to identify barriers and determine the policies, practices, and resources necessary to implement the preferred case management approach. • Determine technology requirements and resources needed to support preferred case management approach.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once resources (new and/or reallocated) are obtained, implement preferred case management approach. • Once resources (new and/or reallocated) are obtained, implement technology solution.
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and adjust case management approach based on successes and challenges arising out of implementation.

Recommendation 2: Improve Litigant Information and Assistance

Need

The children-family justice system can be complex and confusing for litigants involved in resolving disputes. Far more must be done to improve the way information is provided to litigants, including how litigants are ultimately assisted. Families must be able to navigate the complexities of the legal system and understand the outcomes of each court session and the implications of the courts' rulings. They specifically need to know how to:

- Navigate the process
- Fill out forms
- Learn their legal rights
- Understand the consequences of choices they have to make
- Learn about available treatment programs and other services

Pro se litigants are common in family law cases. Their ability to navigate the process can affect the length of the process, the workload of the judges and other system actors, and the case outcomes, both legal and human. More information to pro se litigants is needed, both as to their legal rights and as to what to expect in the court process. Cultural differences and language barriers create additional barriers.

Recommendation Summary

- Develop specific improvements to litigant information and assistance based on a litigant survey;
- Examine feasibility of expanding the role and number of court staff to increase procedural advice to litigants in dependency, family law, Becca, offender, and other matters involving children and families;

Applicable Guiding Principles

Understandability

- Assure that families understand the terminology used in the court and what they are being ordered to do.

Cultural Competence

- Increase awareness and sensitivity to issues of language and cultural differences.

Considerations

A particular challenge is how far can the court really go in providing assistance to litigants. Legitimate concern is raised when assistance crosses into providing legal advice. This removes the court from its objectivity. Consideration must be given to where this threshold is, and to the extent assistance crosses over into providing legal advice, are there other methods of directing litigants to the services that they so much need.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey litigants and attorneys to identify a) the gaps between the information litigants need and the information that they are presently getting and b) the preferred options for addressing those gaps. • Assess survey results and examine innovative practices from other fields to develop an action plan with specific steps for improving litigant information/assistance; identify resources needed to implement action plan. • Convert existing procedural and way-finding information into the most commonly used languages. • Determine alternative sources where litigants might receive legal advice. • Improve the written and online materials available to litigants • Assess feasibility of expanding the role of the public defenders to provide assistance to indigent, pro se litigants in family law cases.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once resources (new and/or reallocation) are obtained, implement action plan • Develop ongoing mechanisms for feedback from litigants, attorneys, and other stakeholders to gauge impact of improvements, anticipate changes in litigant needs, and continually seek improvements • Expand the scope of facilitator staff, and staffing levels as appropriate, to

	<p>provide procedural advice to litigants in dependency matters as well as family law, Becca, and offender matters; and particularly in dependency matters to assist litigants post adjudication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate into the Facility Master Plan process the need to provide rooms where attorneys and caseworkers can meet privately with the parties, so that the families don't have to discuss their intimate problems in a public hallway or waiting room; and to provide work spaces for litigants to have online access at the court.
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review feedback; if appropriate, modify or improve litigant information and assistance

Recommendation 3: Reduce Case Processing Delays

Need

There are often delays in the processing of a case, resulting in the need for continuances. Delays are both a great source of frustration and costly on the part of litigants, attorneys, judges and court staff. Actions that minimize delays and continuances are needed. Specifically, with regard to timeliness and predictability, the court and its system partners need to address the length of time from the start of a case to its final resolution or disposition; the time spent waiting in court for a case to be called on hearing days; and the number of times that an event in a case is scheduled to take place but does not happen when scheduled. Because cases cannot move forward until all of the needed reports and evaluations ordered by the court are completed, the reports and evaluations need to be completed and provided to the judge in a timely manner.

Applicable Guiding Principles

Accessibility

- Processes are convenient, timely and affordable to everyone
- Optimal outcomes with minimal appearances

Effectiveness

- Coordination of orders and the requirements placed on litigants
- Outcomes that address the causes as well as symptoms of problems

Recommendation Summary

- Improve case management; eliminate unnecessary or duplicative hearings, improve trial scheduling, and assure that judges have the necessary information to accomplish something at every hearing.
- Develop and utilize an automated case management system that is capable of identifying and providing complete information on all the cases involving a family.

Considerations

Improvements to case processing will require a concerted effort on the part of the court and its children and family justice players. Agreement about what needs to change, when to implement the changes and how to implement the changes will be necessary. A consistent concern from various stakeholders was the number of continuances which impact litigant travel and time lost from work or school. There is a need to assure that the necessary information for each hearing –

including assessments and chemical tests – is produced in a timely manner. It is also critical to have all the necessary system professionals available and present at hearings.

The multiple information systems involved in the justice system applies to all system players. Not only does the court utilize multiple information systems, the Prosecuting Attorney, Attorney General, public defenders organizations and Child Protective Services each have their own information systems. Two obstacles that have to be overcome are (a) confidentiality requirements and how to maximize information exchange within those requirements; and (b) a means to develop common identifiers across cases that may involve parties with different last names. Since 2004, the Systems Integration Project has developed a technology proposal that would allow tracking youth who are involved in the offender, child welfare, and potentially other systems.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine work processes and propose changes necessary to reduce processing delays, develop implementation plan, and identify needed resources.• Examine other issues such as completing court-ordered services that may be causing delays.• Determine technology requirements to support case processing changes.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once resources (new and/or reallocated) are obtained, implement case processing changes.• Once resources (new and/or reallocated) are obtained, implement technology solution.
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and adjust case processing improvements based on successes and challenges arising out of implementation.

Recommendation 4: Optimize Therapeutic Courts

Need

Therapeutic courts (juvenile drug court, juvenile treatment court and family treatment court) are focused efforts by many parts of the justice system address critical issues for children and families. These distinctive courts work intensively with youth and families whose legal matters are exacerbated by drug and or alcohol abuse, or youth who have co occurring mental health matters along with substance abuse issues.

The court's comprehensive approach and individualized case planning efforts require higher levels of coordination than mainstream cases in the juvenile or dependency systems. The recommended interventions should be individualized to meet the needs of families. Services should be coordinated among the various providers so that families are not overburdened or over scheduled with multiple providers. In some cases, connecting the family with a provider before leaving the courthouse will greatly assist clients in taking the necessary and often daunting first steps.

Therapeutic court cases should be regularly evaluated for success benchmarks so that individuals and families who need greater assistance or a different program can be moved to a better

program in a timely fashion.

Considerations

Use of the therapeutic courts has grown in the last few years. The court and its system partners are nearing a point of decision regarding the size of the therapeutic courts. In addition to developing and initiating work process improvements that coordinate client treatment programs and assessing an individual's progress, an evaluation of the programs should occur. Therapeutic courts' case processing is much more expensive than handling cases in a mainstream fashion, with a trade-off of reduced recidivism. However, the savings in recidivism may accrue to other than the agency paying for the therapeutic court case processing. Gathering and analyzing the data around the therapeutic courts will inform the subsequent policy discussion and decisions. Consideration should also be given to the approach developed by Reinvesting in Youth for capturing savings accrued by agencies other than one implementing the service.

One of the key lessons gleaned from the recent process evaluation of the adult drug diversion court is the need to gather and analyze program data so that the programs can be refined and improved, with the goals of increasing graduation rates, shortening time to graduation and reducing recidivism. Additionally, developing and implementing an assessment tool that would assist in customizing levels of supervision for participants and help identify likelihood of successful treatment outcomes.

Applicable Guiding Principles

Comprehensiveness

- Cases linked to provide comprehensive responses to multiple family problems
- A comprehensive, coordinated service network

Effective

- Coordination of orders and the requirements placed on litigants.
- Outcomes that address the causes as well as symptoms of problems.

Recommendation Summary

- Gather and analyze therapeutic court data.
- Conduct policy discussions to develop a sustainable approach to determining the size and funding for therapeutic courts.
- Establish and implement sustainable approach for therapeutic courts.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convene a policy discussion with system partners, both internal to King County and at the state level, to develop a sustainable approach to determining the size and funding for therapeutic courts.• Gather and analyze therapeutic court data.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement sustainability approach for therapeutic courts.
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and adjust sustainability approach based on successes and challenges arising out of implementation.

Recommendation 5: Provide Case-Related Services On-Site

Need

In addition to the actual in-court proceeding, there are numerous court-related services that if readily accessible help move the case through the procedural steps necessary to bring the case to resolution. These include the services of interpreters for form preparation or for in-court proceedings; urinalysis; paternity testing; assistance with forms completion; mediation and facilitator services; supervised visitation capacity; juvenile detention; and juvenile probation. In addition, court orders often require specific next steps, as they relate to a child or family, and it is critical that litigants arrange for all necessary services before they leave the facility in which the litigants have gathered and the decisions have been made. This issue is addressed in Recommendation #6.

Recommendation Summary

- Incorporate into FMP process all needs associated with providing court related support services on site.
- Implement new services on site, once facility is available.

Applicable Guiding Principles:

Accessibility

- The justice system should be convenient and timely
- Court-related services should be provided on the same site as the court facility

Comprehensiveness

- Assure that all of the court-related support services necessary for the court case are available when needed, in the courthouse if possible

Considerations

There is general agreement that those services directly related to the case processing through the system are best provided at or near the court setting. The lack of space makes this currently impossible. The current sites for both juvenile and family law cases are full. To the limited extent these services are currently offered, they are often not easily located and the spaces not configured in a way so as to optimize service delivery. Greater flexibility exists on services needed by children and families, such as ongoing treatment services, which might best be provided in the community in which the litigants live or work. These considerations are discussed at further length in recommendation number five.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess the need, including volume, for space and staffing necessary to provide all court-related support services on-site.• Incorporate into the FMP planning all court-related support services necessary for the court case, including but not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Adjacent juvenile detention facility○ Juvenile probation○ Drug and alcohol evaluation○ Mediation services○ Urinalysis
-----------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paternity testing ○ Interpreters ○ Family court facilitators ○ Holding cell for incarcerated parents ○ Childcare ○ Food service ○ Law library ○ Supervised visitation capacity ○ Parent assistance (e.g., parent seminar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate, into the FMP planning, appropriate work spaces for all agencies or organizations with staff assigned to the facility such as the Prosecuting Attorney, Public Defenders, the Attorney General, private counsel, and the Department of Social and Health Services caseworkers.
Mid/Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement services once space in new or remodeled facility is available and funding is secured.

Recommendation 6: Establish within the Court Facility Screening, Assessment, and Linkages to Community-Based Social and Treatment Services

Need

Clients can be overburdened with having to make numerous trips for court hearings, multiple assessments, and services. Moreover, their success is further compromised if screenings, assessments, social services, and treatment are not coordinated or are duplicative. Court orders often require specific next steps, as they relate to a child or family, and it is critical that litigants arrange for all necessary services before they leave the facility in which the litigants have gathered and the decisions have been made. Within the community service network, there are not consistent procedures for screening, assessment, and intake for children and families referred from the court system for services.

Recommendation

Provide an integrated process for screening, assessment, and enrollment into social and treatment services on the site of the court facility so that clients can be engaged and linked to social and treatment services before they leave the court facility. This includes resolving potential barriers to participation – such as scheduling, transportation, interpreters, funding, and childcare.

Applicable Guiding Principles

Effectiveness

- Responses and interventions tailored to meet the particular needs of families.
- Make it possible for families to succeed by avoiding so overburdening them with different treatment programs

Accessibility

- Make services more accessible to families throughout King County
- Provide screenings, assessments, and linkages to social and treatment services on the same site as the court facility

Considerations

As the COG discussed the concept of a “full-service” or “one-stop” justice facility, it was a high priority to successfully link and engage clients to counseling, treatment, education, and other human services at the same time they are already on site for their court hearings. While the COG also considered the possibility of providing these services on site, there was a preference for clients to receive these ongoing social and treatment services in their community, particularly given the size of the County and its transportation challenges.

This recommendation contemplates that treatment and service providers develop a process for coordinating screening, assessment, and intake on site so that clients are scheduled for their next appointment and receive assistance to resolve issues that might prevent participation in services. The COG also noted that this recommendation should take into account the different challenges between engaging children and adults in social and treatment services.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with the Department of Community and Human Services and providers, develop an integrated process for screening and assessing clients and linking them to providers before they leave the court facility.• Identify the resources necessary to implement this process, including technology and facility space.• Incorporate in the facility planning process appropriate space and adjacencies to support this process.
Mid/Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement integrated process for screening, assessment, and linking clients to services once space in new or remodeled facility is available; and assure contract provisions incorporate this new process.• Review and adjust integrated process based on successes and challenges arising out of implementation.

Recommendation 7: Provide a Safe and Secure Environment for Litigants, Public, Court and Court-related Staff

Need

Court cases are often highly volatile. It is imperative that the environment for litigants, witnesses, family members, attorneys, staff and judicial officers is safe and secure. Every individual who has business before a court, whether voluntarily or under court order, is entitled to feel safe. The courthouse must be a safe place for litigants and their families, jurors, witnesses, victims of crimes, court personnel, judges, and the general public to conduct their business. Children-Family cases statistically pose the greatest threat of violence of all case types. Attention needs to be given to identifying cases that pose a special danger, such as cases involving juvenile gang members or volatile family law cases. It is crucial that people see courthouses as places where problems are solved.

Recommendation Summary

- Collaborate with the Seattle Police Department, Sheriff’s Office, Facilities and the US Marshals Office to identify and implement methods for assuring a safe and secure

environment for litigants, jurors, the public, attorneys, staff and judges.

- Assure FMP process incorporates security and safety measures into the design of the buildings.

Applicable Guiding Principles:

Accessibility

- This access must be secure and safe.

Effectiveness

- The court process can only be effective to the extent families can resolve their cases in a safe/secure environment.

Considerations

The national news has been filled with tragic events related to attacks on the judiciary and disruption of the judicial process. The ramifications for the litigants, witness and jurors, are significant. One cannot insist that the public resolve their disputes in a physical environment in which order cannot be maintained. Providing a safe environment for all requires careful planning, security staffing and facilities built to reflect security and safety considerations. All court staff should have training in preventing and handling violence in the workplace and responding appropriately to potentially threatening situations. Effective use of technology is also critical in this arena. Technology includes equipment for screening people and packages entering the courthouse, close circuit television cameras both inside and outside the courthouse and duress alarms. All equipment requires appropriate staffing and proper testing and maintenance. Courthouse design is critical in ensuring secure and safe facility and needs to encompass secure parking and separate circulation for transporting in-custody defendants.

The Superior Court has established a Safety/Security Committee specifically for this purpose. The US Marshals Office, the Sheriff's Office and the King County Facilities Division are involved in this assessment effort.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include the need to provide a secure and safe environment into the Facilities Master Plan planning.• Complete Safety Assessment in collaboration with US Marshals Office, King County Sheriff's Office and King County Facilities Management Division.• Develop clear protocols with law enforcement agencies who respond to emergencies and who determine that an emergency exists.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include security/safety in the design of any new facility.• Work with King County Sheriff's Office and Facilities Management to support resource needs as they relate to safety and security, encompassing technology, staffing, and training.
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assure new facility reflects recommended safety and security design elements and corresponding staffing levels.

Recommendation 8: Improve Facility Accessibility

Need

Accessing the court facility itself can present additional difficulties to some litigants and court users. The additional burdens take the form of time and expense traveling to attend court hearings and required service programs, wasted or unnecessary court appearances, multiple requirements that the litigant must meet and the high expense of some court-ordered requirements. It is particularly challenging for litigants who live outside of the urban areas to travel cross-county for hearings or treatment appointments on the county's public transit system. Parking at or near the various courthouses is extremely challenging. Because hearings and other court related work occur during regular business hours, scheduling around a litigant's work, school or daycare schedule can add another level of complexity to litigants trying to successfully meet their court ordered responsibilities.

Considerations

Simply getting to the facilities is a great challenge for many of the litigants, staff and community service partners. Transportation in King County is a significant factor for all residents. Public transportation between courthouses is limited, with cross county travel extremely difficult for litigants and staff who live outside of the urban areas. Some litigants are required to travel several hours from home to court or a court ordered appointment and several hours back again. Litigants who have jobs, attend school or are responsible for child or elder care are hit especially hard by the region's transportation issues and public transits particular limitations as well as the constrained parking situations. Options to address the transit needs of litigants, staff and providers include establishing shuttles between the courts, increasing cross county transit routes, providing alternative transportation script such as for a taxi and scheduling appointments or hearings more flexibly.

The operating hours of the court occur during "regular" business hours, also the time when litigants are in school or working. In order to increase accessibility, the court should consider adding evening or weekend options for certain case types.

Technology can increase litigant access to the court. Much of the non hearing and trial activity of the court is conducted in person and does not utilize technology as an alternative to accomplishing business. For example, some needed forms and instructions are available via the internet but not all. Additionally, use of the limited number of self service computers and work stations available to clients or litigants at the sites could be expanded for broader utilization. The Family Law Information Center operates only at the RJC, not at downtown.

Law enforcement also expressed a significant challenge they face when an arrested youth is not eligible for secure detention and does not have a readily available placement with a family member. Providing more accessible alternatives for law enforcement has been a priority since adoption of the Phase II Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan in 2000. Portland, Oregon and Albuquerque, New Mexico have worked with local communities to implement "reception centers." At these centers, youth can either be placed with a family member or a shelter and if appropriate have other service needs addressed.

The impact that the location(s) of the court have on court users, be they litigants, attorneys, police, court staff or community providers is significant. Thus, the process to determine where court services are offered will require focused policy analysis and broad discussions on the parts of the court, county, and stakeholders.

It should be noted that access for litigants also means that the preferred case management approach (Recommendation 1) and case processing (Recommendation 3) minimize the number of trips required by litigants to resolve their cases and once they reach the court facility the amount of time lost from work or school is minimized. Please refer to Recommendations 1 and 3 for specific considerations and steps.

Applicable Guiding Principles

Accessibility

- The justice system should be convenient, timely, and affordable to everyone with a legitimate concern

Recommendation Summary

- Improve access to court facilities through expanding public transportation options to and between court locations.
- Explore establishing alternative operating hours for some hearings.
- Pilot technology solutions that reduce trips to the courthouse such as remote testifying.
- Pilot a community-based reception center for law enforcement.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey litigants, staff, and other users of the court facilities to identify transportation barriers and possible solutions. ○ Working with transportation entities, develop proposed transportation pilot project(s) based available data and survey findings and identify need for potential resources. • Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct analysis of parking needs and options. • Alternative Operating Hours and Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review literature and comparable jurisdictions about feasibility of operating during alternative hours for appropriate case types and propose a pilot project in conjunction with system partners (identify resources). ○ Identify appropriate court proceedings where video attendance can substitute for in-person attendance; develop pilot to test for selected cases and identify resources. • Reception Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a cross-agency team to develop a pilot project and identify needed resources.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include parking considerations in the design of any new facility. • Once resources are obtained, implement transportation pilot projects. • Once resources are obtained, implement pilot projects on alternative hours

	and remote technology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once resources are obtained, implement reception center pilot project. • Incorporate in the facility planning process results from piloting transportation, alternative hours, and technology solutions
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where successful, expand implementation of pilot projects for transportation, alternative operating hours, remote technology, and reception center. • Periodically survey litigants, staff, and other users to identify and resolve emerging transportation and other barriers to accessing court facilities. • Periodically assess whether new remote technologies can cost effectively improve access.

Recommendation 9: Assure Cultural Competency

Need

As the population in King County has grown, its cultural diversity has increased. Culture has a major influence on effectiveness of the justice system to deliver services. This influence goes well beyond language differences to include different beliefs, values, and behaviors associated with the courts and justice system. For example, culture can affect how people think about extended family relationships, gender roles, tribal issues, and child rearing practices. It can also involve how people define justice, determine if and when it is appropriate to involve the state in resolving problems, and fashion responses to problems. When cultures meet within a justice system, they often present opportunities both for misunderstanding and creative problem-solving.

Cultural competency means first understanding where, how, and why culture matters in the justice system. It then involves developing individual, organizational, and system capacity for culturally appropriate service delivery that helps individuals successfully navigate the courts and justice system, process information, make wise decisions, and comply with court orders. Cultural competency does not mean that one can understand the motivations, needs, and expectations of a particular individual simply because one has a general understanding of the individual's cultural background. Instead, cultural competency provides tools to help unravel the complexity of individual circumstances.

Finally, cultural competency has a role in addressing the significant overrepresentation of minority youth and families in the offender and child welfare systems. While there are existing efforts in these systems to reduce this overrepresentation, the delivery of culturally competent justice and treatment services is another crucial tool in this work.

Recommendation Summary

- Ensure regular involvement of clients, community leaders, and service providers from minority communities in efforts to improve cultural competency (and address overrepresentation).
- Identify points in the court process and service delivery system most sensitive to issues of cultural competency and work with affected minority communities to improve cultural competency.
- Develop and conduct staff cultural competency training.

- Encourage building cultural competency into the policies, procedures, and training of all agencies so that it becomes a regular part of doing business.

Guiding Principles

Cultural Competency

- Assure that the court system is sensitive to the issues of language and culture.
- Help reduce minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Effectiveness

- Responses and interventions tailored to meet the particular needs of families.

Considerations

Cultural competency encompasses building the knowledge and skills of all individuals and systems to work effectively with families from many different cultures. Involving clients, community leaders, and service providers from the minority community is a prerequisite to improving cultural competency. In addition, on a national level, there is an increasing body of research on cultural competency that includes assessment surveys and training curriculum.

Cultural competency is a component of every recommendation within this OMP. It involves translating appropriate materials into different languages, ensuring screening and assessment tools are culturally relevant and training staff to understand the different ways each culture responds to the justice system. The first step for this recommendation is to form a standing team of system professionals and community representatives with the sole focus of assuring cultural competency. This team would assess priority areas for improving cultural competency and work with affected areas to make changes. Given the importance of the front end of the court system, one focus of this work should be to ensure all families at first contact with the system can easily access culturally appropriate information and assistance. This team would also support the development of other OMP recommendations to ensure cultural competency is addressed.

While cultural competency is one strategy within the broader goal of reducing disproportionate minority involvement in the justice system, it alone is not sufficient. Existing efforts focused on reducing disproportionate minority involvement in the offender and dependency systems should continue to be supported.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a standing team of system professionals and community representatives to consider efforts to improve cultural competency, taking into account national approaches for improving cultural competency. • Conduct an assessment of cultural competency needs and develop an action plan. • Identify points in the court process and service delivery system most sensitive to issues of cultural competency and work with affected minority communities to improve cultural competency. • Develop and conduct staff cultural competency training. • Encourage building cultural competency into the policies, procedures, and training of all agencies so that it becomes a regular part of doing business.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement action plan.

Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically assess cultural competency needs.
-----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Recommendation 10: Optimize Technology

Need

The complexity of court processes and related services mandates development of technology systems which can match that complexity and result in useful information for both the justice system and the public. The current juvenile and family justice system relies upon 21 stand alone applications and five major technology systems. The specific needs of the justice system and the public need to be clearly identified, and corresponding technology solutions matched with those needs.

Applicable Guiding Principles

Accessibility

- Technology is critical for connecting people to services before they leave the courthouse.
- Technology is critical for scheduling litigants for court proceedings and for notifying litigants and others of the court proceedings.

Understandability

- Technology is critical for providing explanations of the court process, such as on web sites or for focus completion.

Comprehensiveness

- Technology is critical for coordinating or linking cases and for providing a person-based history.

Effectiveness

- To be effective, the court process relies on having all necessary information available at key decision points.

Considerations

As a part of the research for the OMP, consulting firm MTG was contracted for two deliverables. The first deliverable was an inventory of data systems currently in use and the second was a series of technology recommendations which reflect technology solutions to the business recommendations included in the OMP. The first deliverable described the significant systems the justice system currently relies upon. Each system's purpose is described. The majority of the systems have limited capacity for data exchange, severely limiting their broad use and creating significant duplicate data entry. Even where data sharing is possible, data is typically not shared in real time. The survey document also reveals significant overlap between the systems.

Within other OMP recommendations, the following technology needs were highlighted:

- An automated case management system to support the preferred case management approach (Recommendation 1)
- Improved online materials for litigants (Recommendation 2)
- An automated case management system to support case processing changes (Recommendation 3)
- Potential technology requirements to support an integrated process for screening and

assessing clients and linking them to providers before they leave the court facility
(Recommendation 6)

- Video technology for remote testimony or participation in court hearings
(Recommendation 8)

An overall technology approach should be developed that addresses not only these needs but also the opportunities identified in the MTG report and other initiatives related to the children and family justice system.

An additional technology consideration is the extent to which the county can rely upon technology advancement support through the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts. The King County Superior Court and the Clerk's Office have for many years utilized the State's Superior Court Management Information System (SCOMIS), and Judicial Information System (JIS) for a variety of management functions related to the legal case filing. Efforts have been underway for many years to improve JIS and to replace SCOMIS, but many limitations remain. In order to respond to the local business needs of the Superior Court and Clerk's Office, staff have worked to create local technology solutions to match the local business needs. For planning purposes, this trend toward internally developed solutions will likely need to be continued.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalize deliverable from MTG and summarize all other technology needs identified in this OMP.• Convene technology solutions workgroup with representatives from affected information technology and operational groups to review the MTG report and technology needs identified in this OMP and develop approach for technology that includes prioritizing projects, piloting potential solutions, and identifying necessary resources.
Mid Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek resources to implement the approach.
Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the system(s) necessary to meet the business needs of the justice system and the information needs of the public

Recommendation 11: Provide Facilities that Meet the Needs Identified Above

Need

The limitations on the availability of space within the current court facilities have lead to some fragmentation of services, with some functions being located off site (in leased space) or if within the building, on a different level from their ideal deployment and adjacencies. One of the facilities, the Youth Services court facility, is over 40 years old and currently needs over \$20 million in substantial major maintenance improvements.

Facilities and space should serve rather than drive preferred functional adjacencies. This OMP outlines new potential directions that include providing a full array of services on-site, enhanced case management approaches, improved information and assistance to litigants, and other recommendations that in total would require additional space and a different facility.

Considerations

Once the OMP is approved, the next step is to examine the facility implications by completing a Facility Master Plan (FMP). In particular, the FMP should include an examination of three facility options based on the preferred packages selected by the Cabinet Oversight Group:

Facility Option	Phase I	Phase II
A	Single Full Service Facility	NA
B	Single Full Service Facility	Second Full Service Facility
C	Two Full Service Facilities	NA

These options could be compared to a fourth option which would only address the long-term facility needs for the current juvenile court operations. The FMP should also build on the work of the OMP in several other ways.

- Continue the collaborative approach of involving all major stakeholders in the development of the FMP;
- Refine the OMP's long-term workload forecast by case type and subregion;
- Conduct life-cycle cost analyzes of the facility options, including operational, construction, and maintenance costs;
- Include considerations about where to locate facilities such as accessibility to current and planned public transportation systems; and,
- Coordinate with related CJ facility planning efforts.

The FMP workplan transmitted with this OMP includes these and other details necessary to complete the FMP.

Next Steps

Near Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek approval of the FMP workplan and obtain associated funding.• Complete the FMP and submit to Council for approval.
Mid/Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement FMP recommendations.